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ABSTRACT

A survey of alcohol consumption was conducted in the summer of 1977 during the freshman orientation at East Carolina University. The survey population consisted of incoming freshman and the survey instrument was a multiple-choice questionnaire in two parts. The first part requested background information about the incoming students. The second part included questions on the frequency of consumption of beer, wine, and liquor; attitudes toward drinking; effects of drinking on behavior; and the perception of high school drinking patterns. There were 1,342 questionnaires completed and analyzed (58 percent of the incoming freshmen). Response frequencies were computed. Cross tabulations were performed for all meaningful descriptive variables in relation to alcohol use and were analyzed for statistical significance using the Chi square test. Students were found to be largely white, middle class, single dormitory residents. Among the alcohol-use findings were: beer was the most popular beverage; about half or the drinkers did so to be sociable; most students felt that drinking never affected behavior in relationship to class attendance, studying, jobs, accidents, or friendships; and there was no significant relationship between age and alcohol consumption, although the age range was very narrow. A copy of the survey instrument is included in the appendix. The response rate for each question is shown, as well as the frequency and percentage rates for each answer. (Author/LBH)

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SUMMARY REPORT:

ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT AFFAIRS STUDY ON ALCOHOL USE AMONG INCOMING FRESHMEN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

SUMMER 1977

ED157463

Study Initiated Jointly by

The East Carolina University Division of Student Affairs

and the Office of Admissions

Analysis and Report by

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Office of Institutional Research

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EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Greenville, North Carolina 27834

April, 1978

HE 010 302

Summary Report:

Admissions and Student Affairs Study on

Alcohol Use Among Incoming Freshmen

East Carolina University

Summer 1977

A survey on alcohol consumption was conducted in the summer of 1977 during the freshman orientation at East Carolina University.

The survey population was made up of incoming freshmen for Fall 1977 and the survey instrument consisted of a multiple choice questionnaire in two parts. The first part requested background information about the incoming students. The second part included questions on the frequency of consumption of beer, wine, and liquor; attitudes toward drinking; effects of drinking on behavior; and the perception of high school drinking patterns. There were 1,342 questionnaires completed and analyzed. This was 58% of the incoming freshmen.

Response frequencies were computed for all items. Cross tabulations were performed for all meaningful descriptive variables in relation to alcohol use and were analyzed for statistical significance using the Chi square test.

A copy of the survey instrument is included in the Appendix. The response rate for each question is shown, as well as the frequency and percentage rates for each answer.

Findings

I. Profile of Freshmen Class (Descriptive Variables)

The response rate on the first part averaged about 98% (see Appendix). The respondents were predominantly white (89%) with the remaining consisting of 9% blacks and a less than 2% representation of Indians, Orientals, or Spanish Americans. The population consisted of 769 females (57%) and 573 males (43%). The majority of the students were single individuals (99%) under the age of twenty (98%).

Based on parental income and education, most students came from a middle class background. Eighty-five percent of the fathers and 89% of the mothers had a high school degree or more, and 82% had annual family incomes of $10,000 or greater. Over one-third of the fathers (36%) had a college or graduate degree. Also, about one-third (35%) of the annual family incomes were over $20,000.

Most of the students (96%) had graduated from high school in 1976 and had taken a college preparatory program (94%). Most of the students (81%) had a grade point average of B or better. Almost three-fourths of the students (71%) had taken the SAT while another 27% took the PSAT.

The students were distributed more evenly in responses to the item concerning the subject for which high school had best prepared them. The largest number (32%) felt most prepared in mathematics while 28% felt most prepared in reading and composition. Only 10% felt well prepared in study habits.

There was a very high correlation between the students chosen major and the subject for which the student felt well prepared in high

school. About one-third of the students plan to major in health-related fields (33%) while another 24% plan to major in the sciences or math. The remaining were divided among fine arts (18%), social sciences (16%), and the humanities (9%).

Of those majoring in the humanities, 75% plan to attain only the batchelor's degree here at East Carolina University. In the other fields, the batchelor's was considered terminal for only 60% with another 25-35% planning to receive a graduate degree at this university. When considering a final degree anywhere, over half of the freshmen plan to do some graduate work - 40% to work for a master's degree and 18% to pursue a doctoral degree.

Many students chose this university because of its academic reputation and special programs (43%) or on advice from friends or family (42%). Of those choosing ECU because of its special programs or reputation, 41% are majoring in health-related fields, 21% in fine arts, 19% in science and math, 13% in social science, and 6% in the humanities.

More than one-third of the respondents (36%) applied only to ECU, while almost half (47%) had applied to one or two other colleges. Forty percent had not received any other acceptances while 44% had received one or two others. For most of the respondents (78%), ECU had been their first choice. Out of this group, 45% had not applied to any other school and another 45% had applied to only one or two others. Half of the students (51%) indicated "getting a better job" as the most important reason to go to college with another 28% in pursuit of "a general education."

Almost all of the students (95%) live within 500 miles of the campus. Less than one-third (29%) live within 50 miles of the campus, about one-third (32%) live between 50 to 100 miles from campus, and the other third

(34%) live between 100 to 500 miles away. Most of these students (85%) were residents of North Carolina.

A large majority of the students (85%) will be dorm residents. But 13% of those who will reside in the dorm would prefer to be in an apartment. Of the 88 students whose home is within ten miles of ECU, only 27% will reside in the dorm, while of the 294 students living between 10 to 50 miles from ECU, 84% live in the dorm.

II. Alcohol Use

The response rate on the second part varied from 53 to 93%. Beer is the most popular beverage with 76% reporting some consumption of beer. Over half of these students (57%) drank beer at least once per week with 64% of those students drinking an average of at least three cans each time. Liquor and wine were less popular. Of those who reported liquor consumption, only 19% claim to drink liquor at least once per week, while an additional 44% drink liquor at least once per month. Sixty-one percent drank at least three drinks of liquor each time they drank. Wine was the least popular with only 9% drinking wine at least once per week and only 40% of those drinking at least three drinks each time. There was a very strong correlation between how often and how much one drank each time. The more often a student drank, the larger quantity consumed each time the student drank.

About half of the students who drank, did so to be sociable while 29% drank to get high or drunk.

Looking at the effects on behavior, most students (83-97%) felt that drinking <u>never</u> affected behavior in relationship to class attendance, studying, jobs, accidents, or friendships. It did seem to have a slight

effect on spending with 30% reporting that the expense of drinking sometimes caused them to forego other things, and on friendships with the opposite sex, with 27% saying it causes some conflict with the opposite sex. Drinking seemed to have the most effect on "leading to loose behavior" with only 45% stating this never happened, 27% saying it seldom happened, but 20% saying it happened occasionally and 8% saying it happened frequently. This was similar to the pattern for those worrying about the long-range consequences of drinking: 3?% never worried, 30% seldom, 25% occasionally, but 10% frequently worried about their drinking.

The perceptions of drinking patterns at their high school indicate that most students (78%) felt that three-fourths of the students drink to some extent. Twenty-two percent felt that over half of the students in their high school drank to excess.

III. Alcohol Use in Relation to Descriptive Variables

There was no significant relationship between age and alcohol consumption although the older students (20 and older) did seem to drink a little more. However, as stated before, the age range was very narrow. Orientals, Indians, and Spanish students appeared to drink a little more, but again this was less than 2% of the population.

The white students did drink more beer and drink it more frequently than black students. Black students drank wine more often than white students but the quantity consumed did not differ significantly. In regard to liquor, white students consumed liquor significantly more in quantity and significantly more often. The two races differed in their reasons for drinking with blacks drinking more for sociability and whites

drinking to get high or to relieve fatigue. Blacks' reasons for not drinking were more often due to the fact that they do not like the taste. Also, blacks were more likely to worry about the long-range effects of drinking. Alcohol is more likely to cause conflict with friends and more likely to lead to loose behavior for white students than for black students. The above findings were statistically significant at the .001 level. But the response rate for blacks was significantly lower than for whites on all questions except the question on "reasons for not drinking."

Grades had the expected relationship to alcohol use. Those with higher grades drank significantly less beer and drank it less often. Those students also drank significantly less liquor. But the pattern of wine consumption had no relationship to grades.

As expected, males drank beer more often and more in quantity than females. There was no difference in how often males and females drank wine or liquor, but for both substances, the male consumes more. Both sexes are more likely to drink for sociability, but males are more likely than females to drink to get high or to go along with the crowd. Likewise, although drinking is not likely to affect behavior for either sex, males are more likely than females to report that alcohol affected class attendance and studying, led to loose behavior, caused accidents, or affected spending patterns.

There was little relationship between planned residence and drinking, but when considering preferred residence, those who preferred to live in an apartment drink beer significantly more often and also drink significantly more wine at one time. Those who preferred to live in an apartment were more likely than those who preferred dorm residence to drink to get

high or relieve fatigue. Also, those who preferred apartments were more likely to report that drinking led to loose behavior.

Comparing the use of alcohol to the distance students lived from home, the closer to home, the less often a student will drink liquor. Likewise, the further from home a student lives, the more likely the student would report that alcohol use led to loose behavior.

In comparing the father's or mother's level of education to drinking patterns, the higher the educational attainment, the more often a student will drink beer. Also, the higher the father's or mother's education, the more likely the student will report that alcohol use led to loose behavior. These same relationships hold true for parental income. The higher the parental income, the more quantity of beer and liquor the student drank and the more often. For the lowest income bracket, a third (35%) did not drink due to religion. Students requesting financial aid drank less beer and drank less frequently both beer and liquor.

Other incidental relationships were found. Those who came to ECU for its academic reputation or special programs drank significantly less liquor; and, those who were going on for a higher degree (as compared to those planning only a batchelor's degree) were more likely to cite the health factor or money as reasons for not drinking.

IV. Alcohol Abuse

By considering the amount and frequency of the use of beer, wine, or liquor, the characteristics of abusive users of alcohol were compared with nondrinkers or average drinkers. Nondrinkers were inferred from those who did not respond to any of the six questions on the amount and frequency of

consumption of these three substances. Fifteen percent of the population were accounted for in this category. Abusive drinkers were those who drank six cans of beer every day or six glasses of wine or liquor daily. Eleven persons, or less than one percent, were in this category. Heavy drinkers were those who drank at least five cans of beer or five glasses of wine or liquor at least once per week. This category contained 116 students or 9% of the students.

Using these categories, the patterns agreed with the previously stated findings. Heavy or abusive drinkers were more likely to be white males with low grades who are not on financial aid. They are more likely to prefer to live in apartments and to live further from home. Their parents are well-educated, with a higher level of family income.

Heavy and abusive drinkers were not significantly different in their total perception of high school drinking patterns. Heavy drinkers did report worrying about the long-range effects of drinking.

Heavy and abusive drinkers did perceive alcohol as affecting their behavior. They were more likely to state that it interfered with class attendance and preparing for exams, caused conflicts with friends, and contributed to accidents, loss of jobs, loose behavior, and having to forego other things.

APPENDIX

PART I

The following questions compose a two-part survey. The first part is to enable the Admissions Office to prepare a profile of the Freshman Class of 1977. The second part is an alcohol use survey.

Please read all questions carefully and answer truthfully. The information furnished is in no way personally identifiable.

ITEM TABULATIONS

Question Response Rate	Questions	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
97.6%	1. Age by December 31, 1976:		
	A. 17 or younger	658	50%
	B. 18 - 19	632	48
	C. 20 - 22	13	1
	D. 23 - 29	3	*
	E. 30 or older	3	*
99.9	2. Sex		
	A. Male	573	43
	B. Female	768	57
99.7	3. Racial background		
	A. Black/Negro/Afro-American	124	9
	B. American Indian	10	*
	C. Oriental	10	*
	D. Spanish surname American	5	*
	E. Caucasian	1,189	89
98.9	4. Average grade in high school:		
	A. A	240	18
	B. B	843	64
	C. C	237	18
	D. D	7	*

* Less than 1%

ITEM TABULATIONS (Continued)

Question Response Rate		Questions	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
63.0%	5.	Year graduated from high school		
		A. 1976	805	96%
		B. 1975	17	2
		C. 1974	5	*
		D. 1973 or earlier	13	2
99.8	6.	Marital status:		
		A. Not presently married	1,321	99
		B. Married, living with spouse	15	1
		C. Married, not living with spouse	3	*
99.6	7.	Do you expect to receive financial aid:		
		A. No	826	62
		B. Yes	510	38
99.4	8.	Standardized tests taken:		
		A. S.A.T.	951	71
		B. A.C.T.	26	2
		C. P.S.A.T. (11th grade)	357	27
99.3	9.	Veteran:		
		A. No	1,279	96
		B. Yes	54	4
99.1	10.	High School program:		
		A. College preparatory	1,266	95
		B. Other	64	5
93.4	11.	High School program prepared student very well in:		
		A. Mathematical skills	400	32
		B. Reading and composition	348	28
		C. Science	180	14
		D. History, social sciences	200	16
		E. Study habits	125	10
99.1	12.	Residence planned during fall term:		
		A. With parents or relatives	96	7
		B. Other private home or apartment	98	7
		C. College dormitory	1,135	85

* Less than 1%

ITEM TABULATIONS (Continued)

Question Response Rate		Questions	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
99.2%	13.	Residence preferred during fall term:		
		A. With parents or relatives	83	6%
		B. Other private home or apartment	226	17
		C. College dormitory	1,022	77
99.8	14.	Number of other colleges applied to for admission this year:		
		A. None	475	36
		B. One - Two	631	47
		C. Three - Five	218	16
		D. Six or more	15	1
99.3	15.	Number of other college acceptances this year:		
		A. None	599	45
		B. One - Two	582	44
		C. Three - Five	143	11
		D. Six or more	8	*
99.4	16.	College attended is student's:		
		A. First choice	1,036	78
		B. Second choice	253	19
		C. Third choice	39	3
		D. Less than third choice	6	*
99.8	17.	Distance from home to college:		
		A. 0 - 10 miles	89	7
		B. 11 - 49 miles	297	22
		C. 50 - 100 miles	430	32
		D. 101 - 500 miles	460	34
		E. More than 500 miles	63	5
99.3	18.	Reasons noted as very important in deciding to go to college:		
		A. Could not find job	5	*
		B. Able to get a better job	676	51
		C. Gain general education	375	28
		D. Nothing better to do	18	1
		E. Prepare for graduate school	259	19

* Less than 1%

ITEM TABULATIONS (Continued)

Question Response Rate		Questions	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
97.4%	19.	Reasons noted as very important in selecting college attended:		
		A. Advice from former students, friends, or family	547	42%
		B. Advice from teachers or counselor	152	12
		C. Institution's academic reputation and/or special programs	558	43
		D. Wished to live at home	29	2
		E. Not accepted elsewhere	24	2
95.8	20.	Highest degree planned at college attended:		
		A. Bachelor's (B.A.,B.S.)	768	60
		B. Master's (M.A.,M.S.)	381	30
		C. Ph.D. or Ed.D M.D.,D.O.,D.D.S., or D.V.M. L.L.B. or J.D.	136	11
93.3	21.	Highest degree planned anywhere:		
		A. Bachelor's (B.A.,B.S.)	526	42
		B. Master's (M.A.,M.S.)	495	40
		C. Ph.D. or Ed.D M.S.,D.O.,D.D.S., or D.V.M. L.L.B. or J.D.	231	18
93.3	22.	Probable major field of study:		
		A. Humanities	115	9
		B. Social Sciences	199	16
		C. Sciences and Math	298	24
		D. Fine Arts	231	18
		E. Health related areas	409	33
99.4	23.	Father's education:		
		A. Less than high school graduate	205	15
		B. High school graduate	421	32
		C. Postsecondary other than college or some college	221	17
		D. College degree	284	21
		E. Some graduate school or graduate degree	203	15

ITEM TABULATIONS (Continued)

Question Response Rate	Questions	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
99.4%	24. Mother's education:		
	A. Less than high school graduate	148	11%
	B. High school graduate	580	43
	C. Postsecondary other than college or some college	262	20
	D. College degree	251	19
	E. Some graduate school or graduate degree	93	7
93.1	25. Estimated parental income:		
	A. Less than $5,999	78	6
	B. $6,000 - $9,999	145	12
	C. $10,000 - $14,999	296	24
	D. $15,000 - $19,999	294	24
	E. $20,000 or more	437	35

PART II

Alcohol Survey

Please read the questions carefully and fill in the answers truthfully. There are no right or wrong answers. Your cooperation is needed if we are to understand the part alcohol plays in our lives.

Be assured: You will remain anonymous; do not sign the questionnaire.

ITEM TABULATIONS

Question Response Rate		Questions	Item Response Rate Number	Percent
89.6%	26.	Residence		
		A. In state	1,019	85%
		B. Out of state	184	15
97.8	27.	Size of school attended		
		A. 0 - 300	101	8
		B. 301 - 500	166	13
		C. 501 - 800	210	16
		D. 801 - 1100	313	24
		E. 1101 and above	523	40
76.0	28.	Drinking patterns. Let's first take beer. How often, on the average, do you usually have a beer? If you do not drink beer at all, go to question 30.		
		A. Every day	54	5
		B. Several times per week	251	25
		C. At least once a week	279	27
		D. Once or more a month but less than once a week	279	27
		E. More than once a year but less than once a month	157	15
76.0	29.	When you drink beer, how much on the average, do you usually drink at any one time?		
		A. More than 1 six pack	109	11
		B. 5 - 6 cans or glasses	196	19
		C. 3 - 4 cans or glasses	348	34
		D. 1 - 2 cans or glasses	278	27
		E. Less than 1 can of beer (or glass)	91	9

Question Response Rate		Questions	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
56.0%	30.	Now let's look at table wine. If you do not drink wine at all, go to question 32. How often do you usually have wine?		
		A. Every day	9	1%
		B. Several times per week	16	2
		C. At least once a week	49	7
		D. Once or more a month but less than once a week	259	34
		E. More than once a year but less than once a month	418	56
55.0	31.	When you drink wine, how much on the average, do you usually drink at any one time?		
		A. More than 6 glasses	55	7
		B. 5 - 6 glasses	64	9
		C. 3 - 4 glasses	177	24
		D. 1 - 2 glasses	326	44
		E. Less than 1 glass	115	16
76.5	32.	Next, we would like to ask you about liquor, gin, vodka, etc. How often do you usually have a drink of these spirits?		
		A. Every day	13	1
		B. Several times per week	54	5
		C. At least once a week	134	13
		D. Once or more a month but less than once a week	446	43
		E. More than once a year but less than once a month	379	37
76.0	33.	When you drink these spirits, how many, on the average, drinks do you usually drink at any one time?		
		A. More than 6 drinks	132	13
		B. 5 - 6 drinks	158	15
		C. 3 - 4 drinks	338	33
		D. 1 - 2 drinks	303	29
		E. Less than 1 drink	102	10

Question Response Rate		Questions	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
77.5%	34.	Reason for drinking		
		A. Sociability	509	49%
		B. To get high or drunk	303	29
		C. To go along with the crowd	64	6
		D. To relieve fatigue and tension	140	14
		E. To get along better on dates	24	2
53.4	35.	Reasons for not drinking		
		A. Don't like taste	223	31
		B. Religious or moral reasons	109	15
		C. Parents and/or friends disapprove	123	17
		D. Can't afford it	123	17
		E. Detrimental to health	139	19
81.4	36.	Have you ever worried about the long range consequence of your drinking?		
		A. Frequently	107	10
		B. Occasionally	273	25
		C. Seldom	326	30
		D. Never	387	35

NOTE: For items 37-44, please mark your answer using these choices.

A. Frequently
B. Occasionally
C. Seldom
D. Never

Question Response Rate		Questions	Item Response	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
		How often has your drinking ever:			
83.7%	37.	Interfered with class attendance	Frequently	18	2%
			Occasionally	31	3
			Seldom	110	10
			Never	964	86
83.2	38.	Interfered with preparation for exams	Frequently	13	1
			Occasionally	27	2
			Seldom	79	7
			Never	997	89
83.3	39.	Caused conflict with close friends of opposite sex	Frequently	27	2
			Occasionally	101	9
			Seldom	262	23
			Never	728	65
82.9	40.	Damaged other friendships	Frequently	13	1
			Occasionally	35	3
			Seldom	147	13
			Never	918	83
82.3	41.	Caused you to lose a job	Frequently	15	1
			Occasionally	10	1
			Seldom	13	1
			Never	1,067	97
82.7	42.	Caused accident or injury	Frequently	15	1
			Occasionally	51	5
			Seldom	123	11
			Never	921	83
83.4	43.	Led to loose behavior	Frequently	88	8
			Occasionally	229	20
			Seldom	303	27
			Never	499	45

Question Response Rate		Questions	Item Response	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
82.1%	44.	Caused you to forego other things because of the expense of the spirits			
			Frequently	32	3%
			Occasionally	107	10
			Seldom	184	17
			Never	779	71

NOTE: For items 45-48, please mark your answer using these choices:

A. 0 - 25%
B. 25 - 50%
C. 50 - 75%
D. More than 75%

Question Response Rate		Questions	Item Response	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
		What percentage of the students in your high school, in your opinion:			
93.1%	45.	Hardly drink	0 - 25%	979	78%
			25 - 50%	197	16
			50 - 75%	48	4
			More than 75%	26	2
93.0	46.	Drink occasionally	0 - 25%	174	14
			25 - 50%	634	51
			50 - 75%	273	22
			More than 75%	167	13
93.0	47.	Drink frequently	0 - 25%	178	14
			25 - 50%	408	33
			50 - 75%	502	40
			More than 75%	160	13
92.5	48.	Drink to excess	0 - 25%	711	57
			25 - 50%	259	21
			50 - 75%	147	12
			More than 75%	124	10

Question Response Rate	Questions	Item Response	Item Response Rate Number	Item Response Rate Percent
89.1%	49. How many times per month do you find yourself in situations where you are encouraged to drink more than you would like to?			
	A. None	None	772	64%
	B. 1 - 4	1 - 4 times	366	31
	C. More than 4	More than 4 times	58	5